



THE DECORATION ABOVE THE GETTYSBURG SPEECH SYMBOLIZES IN ITS CENTRAL GROUP FREEDOM AND LIBERTY, WITH THE ANGEL OF TRUTH BESTOWING FREEDOM UPON THE SLAVES, FROM WHOSE HANDS AND FEET THE CHAINS ARE FALLING

## The Great Lincoln Memorial

Paintings by Jules Guerin



AMONG the words of the many official memoranda which Henry Bacon, architect of the Lincoln Memorial at Washington, has had occasion to write to the government commission which selected him for the task, there is one phrase concerning the placing of the statue within the structure which stands out like a text: "and the pilgrim will be alone with it."

In all the impressive spaciousness of the central portion of the great Memorial there is room only for the statue; and the pilgrim who comes to see is to get what he should get, it is to get what is surely there, is to feel what Richard Watson Gilder felt when he wrote of the Life Mask of Lincoln:

*Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men  
As might some prophet of the elder day,  
Brooding alone the temple and the fray  
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.  
A power was his beyond the touch of art  
The unaid strength—his pure and mighty heart.*

So all you hundred million Americans who may come to this new sacred place of the country will enter it alone, at least in spirit, even though that may not be possible as a physical fact. Come in groups and delegations and crowds from all the forty-eight states, the names of which are cut in the corner, come even by sight-seeing busses with megaphone guides, if you must; but you will not be sight-seeing at the Lincoln Memorial—not if you are worthy of what the architect, the sculptor and the artist have achieved for you. You will be as silent as was that throng on the Gettysburg battlefield in November, 1863, when there was no sound of applause after Lincoln had finished his speech, when Lincoln felt, because there was no sound, that that speech had failed.

### Harmony and Devotion Marked its Building

YOU should get at least a touch of what the lone custodian has got in his work of guarding the Memorial during the months between the completion of the structure itself and the finishing of the landscape work preliminary to dedication. This custodian is a pipe smoker. He never even mounts the steps to the portal without first knocking out his pipe and putting it in his pocket, never enters without removing his hat. And yet being there is just the day's work for him, and nobody sees him at it.

"I never get lousier here with Mr. Lincoln," said the custodian by way of comment on his job. "I have a sort of queer feeling that he likes to have me here with him. All the loneliness there is, in his own face as he looks out between those columns to the Washington Monument and the Capitol. When you come to think of it, you get pretty nearly the whole story of this country of ours in what you see through those columns and in this Lincoln Memorial

itself." The custodian also said: "I've learned the Gettysburg speech and the Second Inaugural on the walls by heart. The statue looks to me as if it might be just about to say either one of them again."

There are naturally many interesting statistics about this Memorial—the figures and measurements of its majestic dimensions and proportions, the fact that it cost something more than two million dollars, and the considerations which finally determined the site in Potomac Park on the same east-and-west axis with the dome of the Capitol and the Washington Monument. But there are even more significant facts which do not get expressed in figures. They show that from the work of the first digging to bedrock for the foundations to the completion of the Memorial there has been a spirit of cooperation and devotion on the part of all concerned, from the members of the commission to the stone cutters and the laborers. The same workmen who were there at the beginning were there at the finish. There has been no strike. The contractors' charges have been far less than they would have been for a structure of the same size, but secular or commercial in character.

And in all the processes of what builders call heavy operation, from the quarrying of twenty-three-ton blocks of stone ten thousand feet up in the Colorado mountains and transporting them to the Potomac River, to the dangerous caisson work fifty feet underground, no man has been killed and none seriously injured.

The work was in progress more than ten years, counting from the date in 1911 when Congress created the Lincoln Memorial Commission, with President Taft as its chairman. This commission has worked with the Federal Commission purpose—that of obtaining a memorial which American people for all time would instinctively feel to be worthy of bearing the name of Abraham Lincoln and, secondly, of putting such a monument in the right place.

"The popular ideal of a memorial to Lincoln," said the Fine Arts Commission "will be satisfied only with a design which combines grandeur with beauty. Assuming that the memorial must be a large one, there are few sites in which it can be placed successfully; for it is important that a large monument shall stand where its environment can be specially designed to harmonize with it, and where the design need

not be controlled or even influenced by existing surroundings."

No site in Washington other than the one chosen in Potomac Park met these conditions. Concerning one of the several rejected plans the commission said: "The principal reason advanced for placing the Lincoln Memorial near the Union Station or on Capitol Hill is that more people would see it there than elsewhere. It is true that more transient visitors would pass it, but it is also true that an object which we must make some effort to see impresses itself on us with much more force than does one which is seen casually or incidentally. Not how many people see a monument, but how great is the impression made by it, is the real test."

It was a wise Fine Arts Commission.

John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries and biographers, said, speaking of the memorial site and of the general design of Potomac Park as a part of the development of the whole city in accordance with the century-old L'Enfant plan: "As I understand it, the place of honor is on the main axis of the plan. Lincoln, of all Americans, next to Washington, deserves this place of honor. He was of the immortals. You must not approach too close to the immortals. This monument should stand alone, remote from the common habitations of man, apart from the business and turmoil of the city—isolated, distinguished and serene. Of all the sites, this one near the Potomac is most suited to our purpose."

### Of Stately Beauty Viewed from Any Point

AND what John Hay and the rest demanded has been attained. America has its Lincoln Memorial of grandeur and beauty. It is "isolated, distinguished and serene"—but not too isolated. All the world may easily reach and see it. In its comment on the advantage to the beholder of making some effort to see a national shrine, the commission might have gone further. You have not seen this Memorial to the full by merely going to it. Mr. Bacon has produced a structure which should be seen from many points. When looked down upon from the five-hundred-foot elevation of Washington Monument it loses nothing of its symmetry. It is good to look at from the Capitol; but choose some window or balcony about the level of the Senate and House chambers. There are countless vistas through the trees of the park and from the Virginia shore.

But best of all these distant views is that from the heights of Arlington across the Potomac, from the porch of Robert E. Lee's home, from the new amphitheater in the National Cemetery of the soldiers with its inscription from the Gettysburg speech: "We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." They are buried on those heights five thousand unknown and twenty-five thousand known of those soldiers who helped Lincoln.

It is good to see the Memorial from among those graves, not merely as a careless moment, scarcely realized and appreciated, but for an hour, an afternoon. Better still, on an



ABOVE THE SPEECH OF THE SECOND INAUGURAL ARE THE THREE PANELS SYMBOLIZING UNITY, FRATERNITY, CHARITY. THE CENTRAL GROUP IS UNITY, WHERE AGAIN COMES THE ANGEL OF TRUTH, JOINING THE HANDS OF THE LAUREL-CROWNED FIGURES OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH



AMERICA HAS ITS LINCOLN MEMORIAL OF GRANDEUR AND BEAUTY. IT IS "IMBUILT, DISTINGUISHED AND VENERED"—BUT NOT TOO ISOLATED. ALL THE WORLD MAY EASILY REACH AND SEE IT

afternoon of light and shade with shifting, wind-driven clouds, when the majestic shaft to the memory of the man who founded this Republic comes, visionlike, out of shadow as the sunlight sweeps up from base to summit; when the Capitol's dome has its alternating moments of dullness and brilliancy; when the Memorial to the man who saved the Union, glorious alike in grayness and in sunlight, sounds out this pageant of the nation's story which art and Nature have produced and in which every American may find his own symbolism of hope and inspiration and warning.

Furthermore, it is planned—at least hoped—to put, some day, a monumental bridge across the Potomac from the Memorial to the other shore, a bridge from the great shrine housing the speech of "malice toward none," cut in everlasting stone, to the home where Lee pondered and chose the other way.

Henry Bacon called as his associates Daniel Chester French, the sculptor, and Jules Guerin, the artist, and for the years of their work together they formed a virtual

brotherhood in the spirit of Lincoln. They read Lincoln and studied all his works and the many biographies. They talked together of Lincoln during many hours and through many months in their studios and workshops. Each knew at all times what the others were doing and dreaming, and so their vision of what their finished work should be was one.

They knew Lincoln as artists as well as American citizens long before they undertook what they now consider the chief work of their respective professional activities. French had made the great statue of Lincoln at Lincoln, Nebraska. Guerin had made his pictures of the old house and well of the Lincoln birthplace at Hodgenville in Kentucky.

"Unity," said Guerin at his studio the other day, "was the great achievement for which Lincoln struggled, so in that word we found both our chart and our inspiration for the work."

Before one stone was placed upon another in his marble home of memories Bacon knew that the great central room would be a place where the people "could be alone" with the

Lincoln to be created by French. He knew that in the lesser spaces, but not less sacred, the paintings of Guerin would tell again in allegory the meaning of Lincoln's immortal utterances.

So the Lincoln Memorial is far more than the bringing together of the separate works of three eminent artists. It is something from which nothing could be omitted and to which nothing could be added.

"There is nothing new in the design of the Memorial," says Bacon. "It is the carrying on of the best traditions of the great men of ancient times. What else could there be or should there be? Its guiding motive is to quicken the reverence in the hearts of all people for the greatness of Lincoln, to express their reverence as fully as it can be expressed in stone."

In the technical, architectural sense the requirement was simple. Neither the dome of the Capitol nor the obelisk of

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permanent part of the whole composition. This of course applies still more to the clothes generally. My eye travels over the whole figure and meets with nothing but that which is really graceful and yet strikes me as being just what I suppose he was like. I dwell on this minor effect of the thing, because I disagree with the currently profound opinion that modern male costume is bad. It is actually as becoming to a decently well made man as any other costume that I know of—bar nakedness. Only English sculptors, till lately at any rate, have simply skirted the problem of treating trousers and loak coats and things, and apparently only wished they had their man in a toga or in an alb and chasuble, or else dressed him up in one of the numerous kinds of official robes which we possess and which the man probably wore once in a blue moon on a state occasion in which he was feeling exceedingly awkward. You, however, if I may say so, have faced your whole problem.

I do not believe in the least that Lincoln was much interested in dressing well or particularly tidy in any of his ways—of course he was not. But I do not believe, either, that he was intentionally slovenly, or that he dressed with disregard for his company—least of all that he dressed up . . . as if for the music-hall stage, as he has been so often, and so often, and whole-on in those ways.

All this leads up to the general pose. But I must not insist on the details. These are most beautiful and contribute greatly to the combined effect of stability and repose which the figure produces, and the delicate minuteness with which, as I judge from the photograph, you have treated them must much enhance the general beauty of the thing. (Just before I wrote the last sentence Sir A. Wright, whose name you may know as a great philosopher and biographer, called in. He is much interested both in Lincoln and in art. He was extremely struck, and after carefully looking at the photograph and also at one of the fine St. Gaudens statues which I showed him, said of yours, "Yes, this is the statue of Lincoln." He also, by the way, noted the hands. Frank Dickson, who recently refused the presidency of the Royal Academy, also, and others to whom I have shown the photograph but the cut which I had earlier, were much pleased.) I was just about to say that I find the stateliness was a little increasingly satisfactory to me. There are repose and calm which could instantly turn into energy if required, but wouldn't otherwise—and there is the absolutely natural majesty which is majestic.

But I must try and say something of the other end—the face. It is a little difficult to say anything except that I like it much and that it is the most beautiful thing in the statue of course. . . . other who no other beauty in the statue could please me. For of course so small a photograph gives one of a face only a general effect and not the details that make it. I do not think it more so, so sober, and strong and sweet—and in the right, not in the wrong way. I am familiar enough with photographs and other representations of him to feel confident that it gives the real man. But I happen to be very familiar with photographs done in 1859 or 1860. I am very glad that you have, unlike Mr. Barnard (the face of whose statue most, I think, have real beauty, but is slightly overwrought and, I must say, rather gaudy), taken an older Lincoln, for his face has the right kind of development as the man did, during the presidency. You seem

somehow (so far as the photograph can show) to have given the wonderful effect which the eyes had, to judge from . . . a photograph which is private. I think, in The True Abraham Lincoln. I am glad, too, that you have given him his beard.

It is true, I cannot refrain from thanking you as one of innumerable people who will be grateful to you, mostly without telling you, for giving the world what is as likely to remain the statue of Lincoln—a work into which you must have put just much of your heart's blood, so to speak.

With great respect,

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES WOOD.

The mural paintings, each of them twelve by sixty feet, by Guerin, are in the halls of the speeches, screened from it by Ionic columns, just sufficiently to give the statue the sacredness of its isolation. The decoration above the Gettysburg speech symbolizes in its central group freedom and liberty, with the Angel of Truth bestowing freedom upon the slaves, from whose hands and feet the chains are falling. In the group at the left the central figure holds the sword of justice and the scales of equity, flanked by the guardians of the law, holding the torches of intelligence. At the feet of Justice are two shyls interpreting the law. In the group of Immortality at the right the central figure is being crowned with laurel. The standing figures are Faith and Hope and Charity. On either side are the vessels of wine and oil, the symbols of eternal life.

Above the speech of the Second Inaugural are the three panels symbolizing unity, fraternity, charity. The central group is Unity, where again comes the Angel of Truth, joining the hands of the laurel-crowned figures of the North and South and with her protesting wings ennobling the arts of painting, philosophy, music, architecture, chemistry, literature and sculpture. Behind Music stands the veiled figure of the future. At the left, over the Inaugural, the central figure of Fraternity holds within her arms the man and the woman as the symbols of the family developing the abundance of the earth, with the right hand Charity is giving the water of life to the halt and the blind, caring for the orphan.

At the background of both decorations are cypress trees, going up to the bronze beams of the Memorial, filling, tying the whole thing together. Guerin was not merely making a phrase when he said that Lincoln's word unity had been the guiding principle for his associates and himself in their work.

It is better, this Memorial, the second time you go to it. You know that Lincoln is there indeed, waiting for you and looking out always on the United States. You may wish sometimes for an instant that you had known Lincoln in his own time, but with that comes suddenly the fear and horror that, if you had lived in those days, you, too, might have been one of those who despaired and ridiculed him.



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